

## MALTA

**Date of Elections:** 12 December 1981

### **Purpose of Elections**

Under Section 78 of the Constitution, elections to Parliament are to be held within three months of its dissolution. After completing its full term of office, Parliament was dissolved and fresh elections for all the seats announced on 9 November 1981.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Malta, the House of Representatives, is composed of 65 members elected for 5 years. The Speaker of the House is elected either from within the House or from outside from among persons who are qualified for election as members\*.

### **Electoral System**

All Maltese citizens who have attained the age of 18 years and are residing in the country, and who have during the 18 months immediately preceding their registration as electors been resident for a continuous period of six months, or for periods amounting in the aggregate to six months, are entitled to vote. Disqualified from voting are the insane, persons under sentence of death or serving a sentence of imprisonment exceeding 12 months and persons convicted for an offence connected with elections to the House.

Electoral registers are revised and published twice a year, in April and October. Voting is not compulsory.

Any person who has the qualifications for registration as a voter may be elected to Parliament. Disqualified from membership are persons owing allegiance to a foreign State and undischarged bankrupts, whereas holders of public office, members of the armed forces, certain persons party to a government contract, and officials connected with the conduct of the elections cannot, while remaining in these situations, be elected to the House.

Each candidate must be nominated by four voters registered in his electoral division and deposit a sum equivalent to approximately US\$ 100, which is forfeited if the number of votes obtained by him does not exceed one-tenth of the total votes polled divided by the number of members to be elected by that division. Individual campaign expenses are limited to a sum approximately equivalent to US\$ 1500.

For election purposes, Malta is currently divided into 13 divisions. Five Representatives are elected from each of these according to the single-transferable-vote form of proportional representation. Under this system, each elector indicates his order of preference among all the candidates in his electoral division. Candidates are grouped together in alphabetical order

\*Since 1964, this is the first time that the Speaker has been elected from within the House.

under the name of the political party to which they adhere. Independent candidates are listed at the bottom of the ballot paper.

In counting the votes, a quota is first established for each electoral division by dividing the total of valid votes by the number of seats to be filled, plus one, i.e. divided by six. Candidates who obtain a number of first preferences equal to, or greater than the quota, are declared elected.

Should any seats remain to be filled, the surplus votes (i.e. those in excess of the quota) polled by candidates already elected are transferred proportionately to the remaining candidates on the basis of the second preferences indicated. The votes thus transferred are added to those polled by each remaining candidate; the candidate (candidates) who now possesses (possess) a number of votes equal to, or greater than the quota is (are) elected. Candidates with the lowest number of votes are eliminated and their votes transferred to the other remaining candidates according to the next preference shown on the ballot paper. The same operation is repeated until there are no more seats to be filled.

By-elections are held to fill seats which become vacant between general elections.

### **General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The election campaign lasted just over one month. As in the 1976 general elections, the country's two major parties—the ruling Labour Party and the Nationalist Party—were again the only competitors apart from two independent candidates.

Six Labour Party candidates and six Nationalist Party candidates were each returned from two divisions. A writ by the Acting President of the Republic commissioning the Electoral Commission to hold casual elections in relation to the six seats vacated by Labour Party candidates elected from two divisions was issued on 29 December 1981, and the relative elections held on 9 January 1982.

Casual elections in relation to the six seats vacated by Nationalist Party candidates have not been held. In fact, the Nationalist Party has adopted a policy of non-collaboration with the Government.

Mr. Dominic (Dom) Mintoff (Labour Party), Prime Minister since 1971, continued in the post and announced his new Cabinet on 19 December 1981.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the House of Representatives

Number of registered electors. . . . .	238,237
Voters. . . . .	225,466 (94.6%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	1,315
Valid votes. . . . .	224,151

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	%	Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution	Number of Seats won at Previous Election
Malta Labour Party . . .	92	109,990	49.07	34	34	34
Nationalist Party. . . .	136	114,132	50.92	31	31	31
Independents . . . . .	2	29	.01			
				65	65	65

2. Distribution of Members of Parliament  
according to Professional Category

Lawyers. . . . .	.15
Doctors. . . . .	.14
Architects. . . . .	.7
Banking, Taxation and Accountants. . . . .	.6
Trade unionists. . . . .	.4
Contractors. . . . .	.3
Journalists. . . . .	.2
Others. . . . .	.8
Seats to be filled following casual vacancies . . . . .	6
	65

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex*

Men . . . . . j.	58
Women . . . . .	.1*
Seats to be filled following casual vacancies . . . . .	6
	<b>65</b>

4. *Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Age Group*

25-35 years . . . . .	9
36-45 » . . . . . I . . . . .	20
46-55 » . . . . . I . . . . .	18
56-65 » . . . . .	9
66-75 » . . . . . i . . . . .	3
	<b>~59*</b>

\*The one lady member returned at the general elections was appointed President of the Republic at the second sitting of the House, and had therefore to resign her seat as member of Parliament. However, another lady member was elected at the casual elections of 9 January 1982.

\*\*Seats to be filled: 6.